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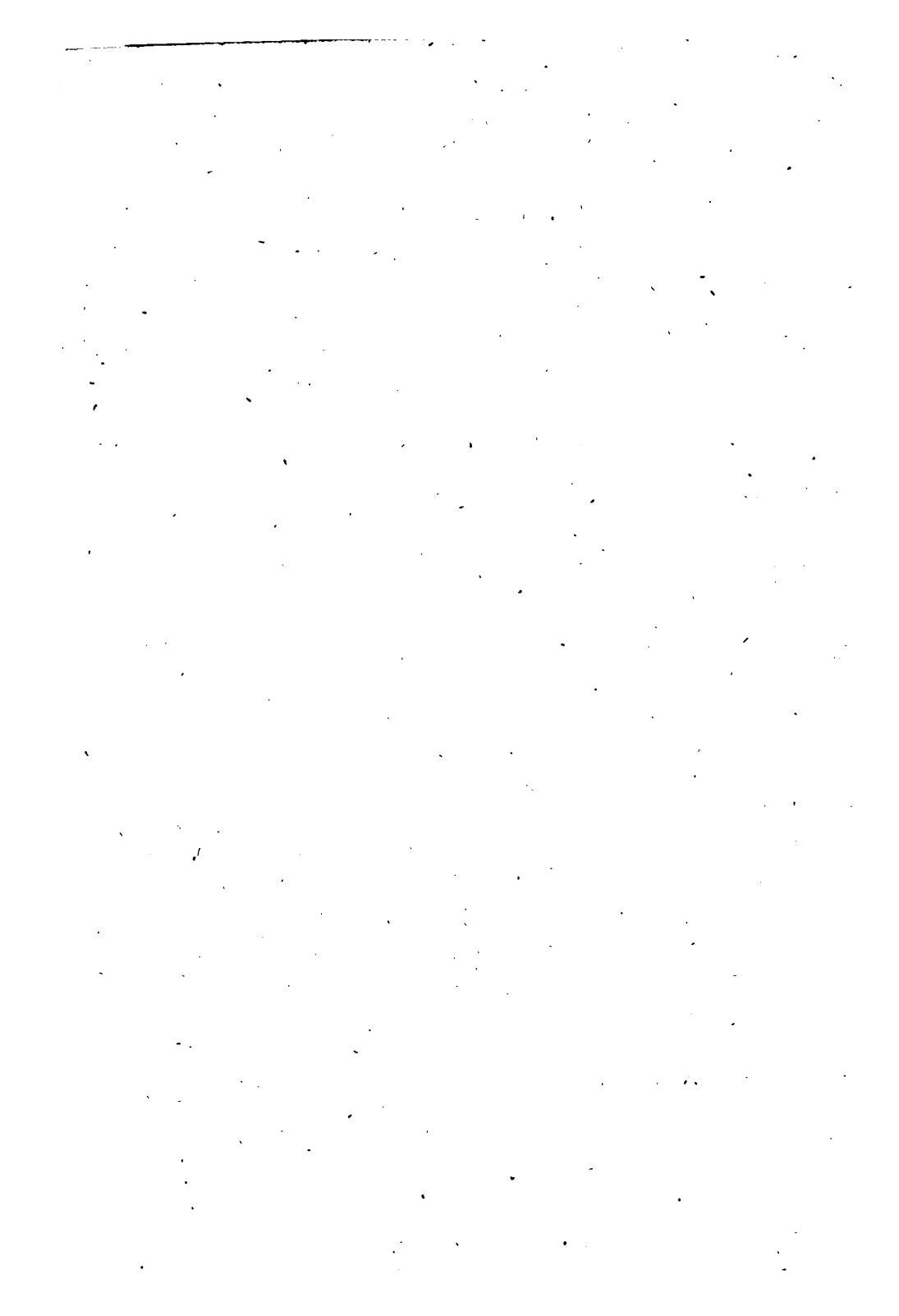
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LOVE OF COUNTRY,

LECTURE

DELIVERED AT THE WOOLWICH INSTITUTION,

BY

HENRY MEAD, 44

AUTHOR OF "FREEDOM, THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE, AND OTHER POEMS,"

"THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF SHAKESPEARE." &c.

"Breathes here a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !
SCOTT.



WOOLWICH :

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R. RIXON, PRINTER, WOOLWICH.

LOVE OF COUNTRY.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own my native land !
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burn’d
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d,
From wandering on a foreign strand !
If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no minstrel raptures swell ;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth, as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentrated all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour’d and unsung.”

SCOTT.

AMID the infinite variety of subjects which attract the attention of the student of humanity, there are none so pleasing as the study of the finer emotions of the soul. It is curious and instructive in the highest degree, to watch the process by which a feeling is converted into a passion, or by which a sentiment originally pure and holy, becomes tainted and corrupt under the influence of a baneful atmosphere. True it is, that somewhat of pain may occasionally disturb the harmony of our meditations,

but he who would become versed in the mysteries of the human heart, will be often called upon to purchase knowledge at the price of happiness, and taught to feel that wisdom and melancholy are nearly allied. As he proceeds in his task it will however be good for him to reflect, that the heart he is dissecting is the heart of a brother, and that in portraying the soul of his fellow-man, he is, though haply unconsciously, shadowing forth his own.

Philosophers early discovered that there existed, and ever had existed in the human mind, certain principles or motives to action ; which, however modified by time or education, always present the same leading characteristics, and of these the principal and most important is the Love of Country. It is the same in every climate under the sun — prompting alike the savage and the sage. It warms the Laplander among his frozen waste, and tempers the heat of the tropics — it is to the moral what gravitation is to the material world — the power which keeps all things in their appointed stations. Without the aid of its beneficent influence, the world would be one vast charnel-house. The possession of a greater degree of sun or shade, would bring mankind into perpetual, and wasting conflicts, until the human race would become extinct, and the fowl and the brute again remain sole monarchs of the mighty solitude. But Providence in its wisdom orders all things aright. By a happy provision all are content with the land of their birth — all deem themselves the possessors of some good peculiarly their own, and which more than counterbalances aught that is enjoyed by their neighbours. Well has the poet said :

“ But where to find the happiest spot below,
Who shall direct when all pretend to know ;
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone,
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;

Re counts the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease ;
The naked negro panting at the Line
Boasts of his golden sands, and palmy wine ;
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave ;
This is the patriot's boast where'er he roam,
His first, best, country ever is at home."

But the Love of Country is not only an universal, but also an indestructible feeling. Who is there that having passed but a brief moiety of the space allotted to man, has not mourned over the instability of earthly hopes, and earthly enjoyments? Fame, wealth, love, all forms of joy and gladness, are but as passing shows ; chance may destroy them—death inevitably will—but our country endureth for ever. It is the same in our youth, as in our old age : we tread the same soil, we feel the same sun that warmed the hearts and nourished the frames of our earliest ancestors, that will continue to delight and cherish our children, when we are mingled with the elements. Tired of wandering, the traveller returns to the home of his fathers—he goes forth to revisit the haunts of his childhood, and, but that his shadow is lengthened, and the visions of fancy are exchanged for the recollections of memory, he might dream that Time had rolled back its iron car, and he was again the happy child, who loved to lie at his length on the grass, and dream that life was as cloudless as the summer sky above it. He looks around, and all seems to justify the thought ; the sunbeams still search the valley as they were wont to do in the days of old ; the brook still ripples forth its wonted melody ; the bee goes murmuring by to practise its sweet alchemy ; and the flowers—they seem to bloom upon the very stems from which he plucked them long years ago, when he thought their fairy

forms were the most beautiful in nature. Such is the tale of human feelings—so rolls the tide of human enjoyments. Whilst the river rushes to the ocean, and the winds to their appointed resting place—whilst the wild bird seeks the cloud, and the fox its den—whilst a stone remains on the hills, or a flower in the vallies,—our affections still cling to our native land: one generation cometh, and another passeth away, but our country endureth for ever.

Genius is essentially patriotic, and were it not so, we should deem the existence of patriotism a fable; for what is genius but an exalted sympathy with all that is great and noble! In the beautiful mythology of the ancients—that noble monument of the unilluminated wisdom of the heathen—the benefactors of their country ranked next to the gods in human estimation. For them the poet tasked his loftiest energies; for their honor the painter, and the masters who wrought in stone, stamped on the breathing statue, or the glowing canvas, the impress of a beauty which nature never bestowed on her most favored children. All things were eloquent in their praise:—

“ They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seem'd sighing;
The waters murmured of their name,
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and grey,
Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain;
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever.”

The great secret of ancient superiority lay in the unity of purpose, the brotherly association of all ranks and orders of genius. All were devoted to the attainment of

one common good, all co-operated in its accomplishment, all participated equally in its advantages. The poet shared the immortality which he gave ; Achilles and Homer—Homer and Achilles—so runs the tide of classic recollections. Not a vestige of their existence remains on the earth, yet their histories are familiar to us as household words :—

“ Not a stone o’er their turf, not a bone in their graves,
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.”

Of the patriotism of genius, our own glorious Shakspeare, the mightiest of the mighty, affords a beautiful example. In a hundred passages he has forcibly displayed the patriotism of his nature. It is as if the bard had looked upon futurity with a prophet’s eye, foreseeing the time, when Englishmen would feel an additional inducement to the love of their country, as they reflected that it was the land of Shakspeare, and that millions of souls yet unborn would live to hail him as the greatest human benefactor of his race. As we listen to the music of his thoughts, we fancy that it is a mother caressing her favorite child. It is as if he could wear his own dear England beneath his vest, next unto his heart, for fear the winds of heaven should visit it too roughly. He calls it

“ This royal throne of kings ! this sceptre’d isle !
This earth of majesty ! this seat of Mars,
This other Eden ! demi-paradise !
This fortress built by nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war !
This happy breed of men ! this little world !
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands !

This blessed plot ! this earth ! this realm ! this England !
This nurse ! this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fam'd for their breed, and famous by their birth ;
Renowned for their deeds so far from home,
For christian service, and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son !
This land of such dear souls ! this dear, dear land !
Dear for her reputation through the world."

But perhaps a more striking example of the inherent existence of patriotism in the breast of a man of genius, will be afforded by a glance at the character of the late Lord Byron. All who are acquainted with the life and writings of that extraordinary man, are well aware of the strenuous efforts which he made to renounce all active connection and sympathy with his native land. Long and successfully did he wrestle with the better feelings of his nature ; but this he was not always to do. In that best and noblest of his works, which was hailed by all good men as the promise and the dawn of a purer intellectuality, he has trampled on the chains of that false philosophy ; and in the proud exultation of conscious genius, flung himself and his fame into the scale of his country's glory. Thus does he boast of his birth :—

" Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause ; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea.

" Perhaps I lov'd it well, and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it, if I may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary ; I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line

With my land's language. If too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline :—
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth, and blight, and dull oblivion bar

“ My name from out the temple, where the dead
Are honored by the nations ; let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head ;
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me —
' Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.' ”

Rest thee, perturbed spirit! That thou mayest have
found the peace in heaven which was denied thee on
earth, is the prayer of every worshipper of true genius!

One more example! It is that of the Tyrtæus of modern days—the German poet Körner. When the Germans, wearied of the yoke of Napoleon, rose as one man to assert their country's freedom, the youthful Körner was amongst the first to raise the standard of resistance ; and, whilst his spirit-stirring appeals to the patriotism of his countrymen rang far and wide through the land, he proved, by his example, that the tongue which could sing the praise of valour, only obeyed the promptings of a heart which was ready to dare all things to obtain it. On the morning of a day not to be forgotten whilst genius and patriotism are dear to mankind—at the very moment of joining in the deadly strife—in that hour which the bravest shrink from, when memory calls up the spirits that have made life a paradise or a tomb, and the gates of eternity are opened to the view—the soul of Körner, as if in anticipation of its glorious destiny, poured forth, like the dying swan, a strain of melody which still lingers on the ear like sweet music heard on the waters. It will repay the reader for its perusal, even in its English dress :—

THE SWORD SONG.

"Thou sword upon my belted vest,
What means thy glittering polish'd crest,
Thus in my ardent glowing breast
Raising a flame?—Hurrah!

"A horseman brave supports my blade,
The weapon of a freeman made—
For him I shine—for him I'll wade
Through blood and death—Hurrah!

"Yes, my good sword, I still am free,
And fond affection bear to thee,
As if thou wert betrothed to me,
My first dear bride—Hurrah!

"Soldier of Freedom, then I'm thine!
For thee alone my blade shall shine—
When, soldier, shall I call thee mine,
Joined in the field?—Hurrah!

"Soon shall our bridal morn arise!
When the shrill trumpet's summons flies,
And red guns flash along the skies,
We'll join our hands—Hurrah!

"O sacred union! Haste away,
Ye tardy moments of delay—
I long, my bridegroom, for the day
To be thy bride—Hurrah!

"Then why cling to the scabbard—why.
Thou messenger of destiny—
So wild, so fond of battle-cry,
Why cling'st thou there?—Hurrah!

"Though fond in battle-fields to serve,
I hold myself in dread reserve,
The cause of freedom to preserve—
For this I stay—Hurrah!

"Then still in narrow compass rest—
Ere a long space thou shalt be blest.
Within my ardent grasp compest
Ready for fight—Hurrah!

- “ O let me not too long await !
 I like the gory field of fate,
 Where death's rich roses grow elate
 In bloody bloom—Hurrah !”
- “ Then forth !—quick from thy scabbard fly,
 Thou treasure of the soldier's eye—
 Come, to the scene of slaughter hie,
 Thy cherish'd home—Hurrah !”
- “ O glorious thus in nuptial tie
 To wed beneath heaven's canopy !
 Bright, as a sunbeam of the sky,
 Glitters your bride—Hurrah !”
- “ Forth, then, thou messenger of strife !
 Thou German soldier's plighted wife !—
 Who feels not renovated life
 When clasping thee ?—Hurrah !”
- “ While in thy scabbard at my side,
 I seldom gazed on thee, my bride—
 Now heaven has bid us ne'er divide—
 For ever join'd—Hurrah !”
- “ Thee glowing to my lips I'll press,
 And all my ardent vows confess—
 O curs'd be he beyond redress
 Who'd thee forsake—Hurrah !”
- “ Let joy sit in thy polish'd eyes,
 While glancing sparkles flashing rise—
 Our marriage day dawns in the skies,
 My bride of steel—Hurrah !”

The song was composed ;—ere the impression had dried on the scroll, the battle had commenced ; and when his countrymen again sought him, it was found that the sword and the lyre were both broken. He sleeps—but it is in an honored grave. The first fruits of the heart—the noblest effusions of the intellect are offered up at his tomb—and the noble-hearted Germans, turning from the

poet's page to the warrior's bier, feel in the innermost depths of their souls the solemn conviction that the *Love of Country is but another name for virtue.*

Having thus endeavoured to prove the existence and identity of patriotism, I will now proceed to portray its effects, and to vindicate its propriety.

In the early ages of the world, it might naturally be expected that the strong necessity which existed for peopling the earth, would have retarded the developement of the patriotic feeling. Such, however, was not the case. In the family of the first man—in the person of the first shedder of human blood—we recognise the unerring evidence of the existence of the Love of Country. It is recorded thus in Holy Writ:—"And Cain said, my punishment is greater than I can bear, a fugitive shall I be, and a wanderer on the earth; and it shall come to pass that all who see me shall slay me." And why this plaint of expatriation? The world was all before him where to choose—hill and valley, stream and plain—all were his birthright, his lawful heritage. The smile had hardly faded from the brow of creation—that gladness which it put on in the morning of its being, when the stars first sang their immortal melodies, and the sons of God shouted together for joy! It was because he was condemned to depart for ever from the home of his nativity—the spot where he had passed the happy hours of infancy, while his soul was as yet unconscious of the knowledge which is not happiness—where he had nightly watched, to gaze upon the cherubim as they waved their fiery swords over the portals of that Eden which he had *dreamt*, and his father had *known*, to have been the abode of happiness. This may teach the philosopher, whether Christian or sceptic, an important lesson: it will teach him

that man in all ages is ever the same — that the murderer, the fratricide had yet a human heart in his bosom, — that he, whose name has become a bye-word for guilt, was not wholly evil, but a compound of strength and weakness, actuated by the same passions and feelings which constitute our common nature.

Turning from the consideration of individuals to that of communities, we are of necessity compelled, from the paucity of our knowledge respecting the early empires of the east, to commence with the Ancient Greeks; and here in truth is as wide a field as was ever opened to the view of poet or sage. There, where the arts had their birth-place, and the glory and grandeur of creation found their first students and expounders — where beauty decked her in a thousand robes, and every spot was consecrated by the presence of genius, the Love of Country first became a sentiment and a passion. Under its exalting influence were achieved the brightest deeds that adorn the history of man — excellence to which after ages can furnish no parallel. In selecting examples from Grecian story, I have been embarrassed how to choose, but proceed to relate one from amongst a thousand instances of valour and patriotism.

Amongst the people of Sparta, or Lacedæmon, as it is indifferently called, the most severe penalties could alone expiate the crime of cowardice, or indifference to the glory of the state. Their wives and mothers, taught to conquer the natural impulses of their souls, rejoiced over the end of those who died in arms for their country's welfare, and reserved their lamentations for such of their children as returned from a lost field. Hence every soldier was a hero, (and every Spartan was a soldier,) and merit of almost superhuman greatness alone secured pre-eminence. This

will account for the performance of those prodigies of courage and virtue, which, without such explanation, would seem but absurd and romantic fictions—the progeny of wild and inventive genius.

It was in the famous expedition of the Persian monarch, Xerxes, into Greece, that the Greeks first taught mankind a lesson which it had been happy if they had never forgotten. In the pass of Thermopylæ the whole force of the Persian army, estimated, at the very lowest computation, at upwards of a million, were withstood by a portion of the Grecian warriors, amounting scarcely to a thousand men, and commanded by Leonidas, one of the kings of Sparta. No hope of after enjoyment sustained their courage through the hopeless strife—no prospect of speedy return, laden with the spoils of the vanquished. Monarch and soldier, Spartan and tributary, came there to *die*, happy if their death could rid the earth of a portion of their detested invaders. Life—the life of the Ancient Greeks—that existence of beauty and flowers! was but as nothing compared with the preservation of their country's freedom. To Greece they owed their existence; it was but a loan, and they surrendered it without a murmur when her glory demanded the sacrifice. When the soil was freed from the presence of the barbarians, their fellow-citizens erected a tribute to the memory of those who had taught them the way to conquer: no pompous enumeration of titles—no labored eulogy of their deeds was inscribed thereon—but, with the simplicity which on such occasions constitutes true eloquence, it recorded the following sentence: “Go, traveller, and tell those at Sparta that we died here in obedience to her laws.”

Nor was it merely in the field of battle that the Greeks evinced their patriotism; the Love of Country entered

into the composition of every motive, and guided the progress of every action of their lives. Their ideas of natural justice, their definitions of right and wrong, and their hopes of after existence in a happier world, all bore reference to the operation of this ruling principle. That in the prosecution of this beloved object, the aggrandizement of their country, they often committed excesses abhorrent to humanity, is a charge which has been frequently urged against them, and cannot be denied by their warmest admirers; but, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that they walked in the light of an imperfect reason—that they were taught that the means were justified by the end, and that whilst their errors were those of universal mankind, their virtues were Grecian alone.

This is a lecture upon the love of country, and not a history, or I would tell how Greece sunk when she had the recollection of Marathon and Thermopylæ—when every part of her soil had become consecrated to glory by the commission of some imperishable action; and how the sons of those who smote the Persian in his pride, and subdued the eastern world, became the prey of the savage and the stranger. Such task I leave to the curious inquirer, with this recommendation, that as he traces out the corruptions of ancient times, he will do well to reflect upon the present condition of his own.

Turn we now to Rome, that other great landmark of the ebb and flow of human glory. Here we behold the operation of the same principles which had wrought such wonders amongst their vassal Greeks, though modified and directed by the peculiar genius of the nation. The Roman was the perfection of soldiership—the very impersonation of the god of war. Despising the intellectual artifices of the Greek, the Roman made to his object by

the nearest road. His plans once matured, no delay occurred in carrying them into effect; but, springing on his prey with a single bound, he either worried it into submission, or tore its heart out. Never before had the world owned so mighty a despot! Glory and gladness were around him — power and pomp were the elements of his being: the weak and the powerful — the savage and the sage — alike submitted to his sway, until, in the language of the gifted author of “Rienzi,” —

“His realm, save the air and the wave, had no wall,
As he strode through the world, like a lord in his hall.”

His power has passed away — his empire has crumbled to dust — but the memory of the Roman will never be forgotten!

In one of those frequent conflicts which marked the progress of the rivalry between Carthage and Rome, the consul Regulus, who in virtue of his station as chief magistrate, commanded the armies of the republic, was defeated and taken prisoner. Sent by the Carthaginians to Rome, with offers of accommodation, he was bound by the most solemn oaths to return to Carthage should his mission prove unsuccessful, and what was his conduct? I will tell you the tale as it is recorded in history. Wearied, it seems, with the interminable strife — commiserating the sufferings of their unhappy countryman, who, once the victorious leader of the armies of Rome, was now the captive ambassador of Carthage, and fully aware of the doom which awaited his return, the Roman senate proposed to accept the terms offered by the enemy; but Regulus counselled a different course. He told them that the resources of Carthage were exhausted — that her people were discontented — and that it only required one mighty

effort to rid Rome for ever of her dangerous rival. It was in vain that the senate pointed out the certainty of his own doom, as the natural effect of his patriotic exhortations—in vain that his wife and children implored him to save the life which might be preserved without dishonour: to each and all the patriot turned a deaf ear; the glory of Rome was dearer to him than his own existence—her profit cheaply purchased with his pain. He returned to Carthage, and the result, either way, justified his own foreknowledge. Regulus died a death of agony, but Rome conquered; and after ages received another proof of the wondrous virtue of the heathen.

Ere I close the page of history, permit me to draw a moral from the facts it relates. Fancy yourselves transported back to the antique time, and gazing upon a banquet given by the consul Cicero. In a gorgeous room, hung round with the trophies of barbaric greatness, and filled with all things pleasant to the eye and the intellect, sits the silver-tongued orator—the glory of the world, and of Rome. Around him are gathered the mightiest of an age fertile in godlike beings—men whose nobility is not derived from the 'scutcheon and the grave—the true emperors of the world. They have met there to celebrate the latest triumph of the "Mistress of Nations," and to do homage to the genius of him who is at present her ruler, and through all time her devoted worshipper. As the memory of former deeds is recalled in the song of the poet, and the tale of the warrior, their hearts beat high with the impulses which marshal men onward in the way to glory; but when the libation is made to the gods, and the cup goes round to the eternal empire of Rome, fancy some pale-browed student prophesying that the day was not far distant, when her power would only exist in the

crumbling parchment and the mouldering stone—when the naked savage, ignorant of, and despising the arts of civilized life, should trample upon the growth and the monuments of a thousand years—and all that virtue had wrested from the grasp of time, should return once more beneath the sway of the great conqueror of all. Methinks I hear the mocking scorn with which the *prediction* would be greeted, and yet we know that the *event* has been fulfilled. And why was this—that a nation should play the spendthrift so wildly, and squander, without remorse, the treasures garnered up by the dead misers who had gone before them? Had the spear lost its point or the falchion its keenness? Or had nature sent them into the world, shorn of the proper strength which alone could enable them to preserve what their fathers had won? Oh no, it was none of these, themselves were the sole traitors to their own greatness. As an arrow sped upwards, turns again to the earth when the force that propelled it is expended, even so does the onward march of nations cease, when the influence of virtue is no longer recognised. The sun that beamed upon the nativity of Rome, shone as brightly upon its decline and destruction. The earth that held in her enduring embraces the builders of its renown, murmured not at the burden of its monuments of grandeur and glory. The outward and visible world was in all things the same; but nature has nought to do with the progress, or the fate of empires. These, the results of human experience, are but mere abstractions—the progeny of man's own creation, and, as such, are subject to the same laws and mutations which regulate his own transitory being.

Enough of History—it has some strange disclosures. It is a drama played in all ages and all climes; the incidents and characters at times dissimilar, but in which

the catastrophe is ever the same. First barbarism, simplicity, and advancement ; then refinement, corruption, and decay—decay at once hopeless and eternal. When we turn to the descendants of the monarchs of old — the inheritors of the lords of science and war, we are irresistibly reminded that nations like men have no second birth. With all the apparent elements of greatness profusely scattered around them, they remain in hopeless and confirmed degradation. With all the vices of civilization, they have none of its redeeming virtues. Theirs is the existence of the snail, whose path is tracked by its slime — the decrepitude of morals, that last sad evidence of irretrievable ruin. Has the world of Greece and Rome passed away? Have *we* entered upon a new order of things? Let the philosopher and the student of history answer the question.

It is a mournful reflection, that the practice of virtue grows out of the commission of the deeds of evil. It is war, remorseless war, which gives birth to the noblest acts of the hero and the patriot. The former owing his glory to the conquest of other lands, the latter to the defence of his own. True it is, that there are not wanting men of fine intellect, of pure and virtuous intentions, who deem that the day will come when war will be unknown, when man contented with his natural share of blessings, will not sigh for those of his neighbour, but exerting every faculty of his soul in accelerating the onward march of improvement, convert the whole earth into one smiling paradise, whose tree of knowledge shall also be the tree of life, and the fruit thereof be perfect happiness. It is a pleasing but a baseless illusion. Mankind will never dispense with the necessity of war, whilst a foot of ground remains to be conquered or defended, or whilst glory and triumph

find, as through all past time, their worshippers on the earth. The belligerent feeling so natural to man, may be refined by the usages of civil life, but can never be wholly eradicated; and whilst man continues to prefer his own interests to those of his fellows, the sword will continue to be the only true sceptre of power.

Truly indeed has Shakspeare exclaimed, that the "web of life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together." Those who contend against the injustice of dominion, forget that it is to conquest alone that civilization is indebted for its progress and its triumphs, and that in referring back to first principles, for the support of their assertions, their arguments only tend to prove the utter incompetency of the natural law, to provide for the onward progress of man. No one in his senses will attempt to deny the necessity that exists for preserving inviolate the rights of property, and yet this principle is at variance with the laws of nature, who if she had intended that one man should be richer than his neighbour, would have manifested her preference by giving him a greater power of enjoyment, instead of framing his senses in the same mould as those of his humblest vassal. She would also have created him with the power to defend his preeminent advantages, and rendered him in all things superior to the rest of his tribe; but the moral law, which, in other words, means the result of human experience, has been framed to supply the deficiency of natural knowledge. Men have agreed to respect certain things, as conducive to their general happiness, which owe their existence alone to the wants of an artificial state of society, and have framed their own laws for the government of their own creations. Passion and impulse, motive and aim, these education cannot change, but all things else in the inward world are subject to the authority of the human will.

The dreamer and the theorist may wander at pleasure amid the mazes of metaphysical speculation, but he who looks upon man such as he is now, and ever has been, will discern that joy and sorrow are inseparably intertwined, and that all which we are accustomed to consider as worthy the attention of a noble mind — the love of glory, the promptings of ambition, and the desire of transmitting to posterity an undying reputation, owe their value entirely to the opinion of man. It is idle, then, to contend for abstractions which can never be converted into realities, and mourn over the absence of that ideal excellence, to which mere humanity can never hope to attain. If the welfare of others be the noblest object of man's existence, then must the patriot fulfil the true end of his being, and though it is not always possible to reconcile the progress of dominion with the precepts of morality, yet is it this very alloy of baser feeling, which is the spring and the source of patriotism. The soul of man is too narrow for the exercise of universal benevolence, it is only the Deity who can love all things. The traveller in a distant land would embrace as a brother, one who spoke the same tongue and owned the same birthplace, though on his native soil he would have passed him in the public way, as an utter stranger, to whose weal or woe he was perfectly indifferent. Thus as a flame fed only from the centre, if spread over a large space, necessarily loses a portion of its intensity and brightness, even so is it with human affection, which only diffuses light and warmth when contracted within a narrow circle. A "citizen of the world," is only another name for one who is wholly destitute of unselfish feeling. It is as if one should say he loved not his father and mother, but the whole world beside. What to us is death, when it divorces not from us our own

kindred ? what but a shadow — a thing to call forth moral apothegms and solemn preachments, upon the vanity of the pleasures which we are still pursuing ? But let the conqueror plant his banner within the domain of our own peculiar world—let a portion of our own being be shorn away, and life and death are henceforth viewed under a new aspect. The sun shines too bright, and the winds pipe too cheerful a tone, and the smiling face of man seems but a cruel mockery of our own wretchedness. It is ever and unchangeably thus. Around the axis of one universal feeling, revolves the destiny of empires. Each, like the ambitious waves of the ocean, striving to overleap its fellow, and by the operation of their restless activity, preventing the stagnation of the mighty mass of life. Not unnatural, then, was the thought of him who exclaimed, “Our country ; may she be ever in the right ; but right or wrong, our country still.”

Yet there are those who will tell us that patriotism is a prejudice, unworthy a noble mind. If so, then is the love of a mother for her child, and that of a young man for the mistress of his heart, mere prejudice likewise. A mother’s love ! oh, who can paint that extatic feeling ! But why should I mourn for the paucity of words, ye have all felt the blessings of its glorious influence ; the heart of the young yet feels the warm impress of it—its memory hath not departed from the recollection of the aged. Oh ! what can equal a mother’s love, when she dreams that all which heaven can bestow of grace and beauty, lies within the narrow circle of her arms — that her infant’s eye is the brightest, its smile the sweetest, that ever beamed upon her delighted gaze. And yet this feeling, so pure and holy, so utterly unmixed with aught of selfishness, must be termed by the philosopher an unreasoning prejudice ; for he would

tell you that the mother's love was not contingent upon the worth of her offspring ; that she would still love on, after all justification of love had ceased, and though the child might refuse to add one drop to swell the boundless ocean of a mother's affection. And the lover, who pours out his soul at the feet of the maiden of his choice, he too is the slave of prejudice ; for is not a belief in the superior excellencies of the beloved object, the source, and the light of love ? As the enthusiasts of old, who believed that the stars of heaven exercised a mysterious influence over the destiny of man, fancied that as their fortunes waxed brighter, the orb of their nativity shone with a purer ray ; even so does the lover, as his heart beats higher, and his hope grows stronger, daily find fresh perfections in the person of the beloved object. This then is prejudice ; for the philosopher would tell you, that all cannot be equally loveable, and that the feeling which owes its power to the influence of fancy, cannot be subjected to the laws of reason. But enough of analysis ! It is sufficient to have shewn, that it is not good to dissect things too curiously, and that as nought of human impulse or action is wholly free from blemish or imperfection, we are bound to decide upon their merits, according as there appears a manifest preponderance of good or evil in the elements of their composition.

There is an anecdote related of Nelson, which will serve to illustrate more fully the nature and influence of the patriotic feeling. It is said that a youth, the son of one of Nelson's friends, was sent on board his vessel, to learn the duty of a seaman under the eye of the Admiral himself. Feeling an interest in the welfare of the boy, his commander sent for him one day to attend in his cabin, and receive some instructions as to his future conduct. After

a variety of important hints had been given to him upon this subject, he was told that there were three things he must ever bear in mind, " firstly, to obey the orders he received, without forming any opinion of his own as to their propriety ; secondly, he was never to think well of the man, who spoke ill of his country ; and lastly, he was to *hate a Frenchman as he hated the devil.* " This, perhaps, was prejudice, most probably it was, but it was the operation of this prejudice, which has made the names of the Nile and Trafalgar, familiar to our infant memories—which broke the power of England's mightiest foe, and cost the life of her bravest defender. Are there any amongst you, who would barter the memory of Nelson for that of the wordiest philosopher that ever cavilled at a dogma, or disputed the existence of a principle ? I will answer for you ; not one. Oh ! if there be one character of modern days that can compete with the giants of antiquity—one name that is destined to go down to posterity with undying glory, it is that of HORATIO NELSON ! Faults as a dispenser of justice he *may* have had—as a man, he *must* have had ; but as a warrior—as a leader of England's battle array, there is not one spot on his 'scutcheon. He lived and died, not for himself—not for the gratification of his own selfish ambition, but for you, for me—for all, who tread the soil, and bear the name of Englishmen. Peace to his soul, his was a noble end ! Nelson was worthy of his England—England was worthy of her Nelson. To England he gave his genius, his blood, his life ; England in return, gave him honour whilst living, tears and a tomb when dead. Cherish that feeling my countrymen, it is your mightiest safeguard ! for be assured that whilst merit meets its due appreciation, whilst virtue and genius find their just reward in the plau-

dits of a grateful people, you will never want a glorious succession of heroes and patriots.

But the praise of patriotism is not due alone to the warrior or the statesman. Every man who performs his duty, in the station in which it has pleased Divine Providence to place him, is a patriot, and that too of the noblest order. It is given but to few to be at once great and virtuous. Genius and virtue combined, are like the glorious moon, which, even in its brightest hours, leaves some spots in shade; but virtue in a people is as the light of the stars, which falls on all places alike. It is the justice of our country, which has extended her sway—which has caused the name of an Englishman to be respected in lands where his power is unknown, and taught the far isles of the earth, that however Honour might roam, “a pilgrim gray” from other lands, yet that there is one spot on the earth, where it might still find a home and an abiding place—that home, that sanctuary, our own glorious England—And is it not a goodly land? This is a description of it, by one who is herself an honour to her birthplace.*

THE ENGLISHMAN.

“There’s a land that bears a world-known name,
Though it is but a little spot ;
I say ’tis the first on the scroll of fame,
And who shall aver it is not ?
Of the deathless ones who shine and live
In arms, in arts, or song,
The brightest the whole wide world can give
To that little land belong.
’Tis the star of earth, deny it who can,
The island home of an Englishman.

* Miss Eliza Cook.

“ There’s a flag that waves o’er every sea,
No matter when or where ;
And to treat that flag as aught but the free
Is more than the strongest dare.
For the lion spirits that tread the deck
Have carried the palm of the brave,
And that flag *may* sink with a shot-torn wreck,
But never float over a slave.
Its honour is stainless, deny it who can,
And this is the flag of an Englishman.

“ There’s a heart that leaps with burning glow
The wronged and the weak to defend ;
And strikes as soon for a trampled foe
As it does for a soul-bound friend.
It nurtures a deep and honest love,
The passions of faith and pride,
And yearns with the fondness of a dove
To the light of its own fire-side.
’Tis a rich rough gem, deny it who can,
And this is the heart of an Englishman.

“ The Briton may traverse the pole or the zone,
And boldly claim his right,
For he calls such a vast domain his own,
That the sun never sets on his might.
Let the haughty stranger seek to know
The place of his home and birth,
And a flush will pour from cheek to brow
While he tells his native earth.
For a glorious charter, deny it who can,
Is breathed in the words, ‘ I’m an Englishman.’ ”

This, though the language of affection, is also the language of truth. From a petty isle of the ocean, our country has become the mistress of half the world. The rival of Rome in the extent of her dominion, she has outshone

her in the triumphs of art, and the glories of literature, and as yet her supremacy remains unshaken. Listen to the language of a gifted man, himself belonging to a people, who own no love for England.* “No power that ever existed, possessed such mighty means of aggressive warfare. Rome in the zenith of her glory was not to be compared with her. *Her morning drums, saluting the rising sun, followed in their course the march of the hours, encircling the whole world, with one unbroken strain of melody, to the honour and glory of Great Britain.*

Yes, England is a mighty land, it remains with yourselves to preserve her so. Recollect that in human affairs it is as difficult to retain, as it is to win prosperity. That the power which was gained by the sword, must be maintained by the sword, and that those who enjoy blessings by inheritance, must never forget the means by which they were obtained. Teach your children that the name of an Englishman is a lofty heritage, and they will transmit it unspotted to later generations. Teach them to spare the vanquished, to succour the distressed ; to hold even the scales of justice, between those whom Providence has placed under their protection ; and above all, never to bow the red cross to an enemy, whilst the life blood flows in their veins. Teach them this, and then, age after age will roll away,

“ Whilst her council and people shall tell the proud story,
Old England for ever shall weather the storm.”

* The celebrated Webster, a member of the American Congress.

